

Biography: Gin Blossoms

2007

Singer Robin Wilson recently encountered a friend who had heard the new Gin Blossoms' single, "Learning the Hard Way," on the radio. At first, the friend was aghast. "I thought, 'Who the hell has the audacity to sound this much like the Gin Blossoms?'" he told Wilson.

Indeed, the Gin Blossoms' inventive, instantly appealing smart pop has proven so influential that Wilson's friend can be forgiven for initially thinking that the song might be by one of the band's many imitators. He might also be forgiven for not realizing that after a difficult breakup, a stirring reunion and a few years of playing live shows together, the Gin Blossoms had completed *Major Lodge Victory*, a new album in stores August 8, that is both long-awaited and well worth the wait. Accept no substitutes: the Gin Blossoms are back.

"We couldn't have learned how to make it work for all of us and still be a band after eighteen years without a lot of blood and history behind us," Wilson explains. "But we have a unique sound, and that's rare. To hear that with new material is really satisfying – and a relief!"

The twelve songs on *Major Lodge Victory* deliver that same signature blend of melody, mystery and poignancy that Gin Blossoms fans have come to love -- from the band's breakthrough album, *New Miserable Experience* through to its powerful follow-up *Congratulations...I'm Sorry* and such enduring and memorable songs as "Hey Jealousy," "Allison Road," "Follow You Down" and "Til I Hear It From You." Since Wilson, guitarists Jesse Valenzuela and Scott Johnson and bassist Bill Leen reunited as the Gin Blossoms in 2002, the idea of recording new songs was something the group thought about but didn't want to force. "I wanted it to happen organically," Valenzuela says. "And it did."

Successful tour dates demonstrated that the many fans who cherished *New Miserable Experience* (which has sold more than four million copies in the U.S.) and *Congratulations...I'm Sorry* (which has sold more than one million) were still eager to hear more from the band. So were their younger brothers and sisters. "I didn't even know if we could get back together," Leen says. "I didn't know we'd have a fan base. I think it helped that our songs never left the radio."

Truly, on the radio it was as if the Gin Blossoms had never left, even as all the band's members moved on to other projects. And getting back together proved satisfying. "A lot of fans came up to us and said, 'I loved you guys for so long, and I was so bummed when you broke up and I never got to hear you play. I'm so glad you're back,'" Johnson says. "That was gratifying. Now I respond by saying, 'You're going to hear us a lot more!'"

To record *Major Lodge Victory*, the band members began working in their native state of Arizona, but ended up returning to Ardent Studios in Memphis, where they had made their previous two albums. “It felt like we were going home,” Wilson says. Drummer Scott Kismirek, who had played with the band for a time after it reunited, joined the group in the studio. Meanwhile, Valenzuela had been busy writing songs. “I wrote a bunch, probably around thirty,” he says, laughing, “though there are some types of songs the Gin Blossoms won’t do. They’re not much for dirges. Not too many blues references either.”

“We are addicted to fast tempos,” Leen admits.

Hence the irresistibly catchy “Learning the Hard Way,” which Valenzuela wrote. “That’s a classic Gin Blossoms song,” Wilson says, evoking the band’s Tempe, Arizona club roots.

Valenzuela also wrote the soaring ballad “Someday Soon.” “I was hesitant to bring that one to the Blossoms,” he says. “I didn’t know if they’d want to do something at that tempo. But I’m glad we did it. It came out really nice.” Wilson brought in the energetic rocker “Come On Hard,” while the two men collaborated on “The End of the World,” with its lush choruses and Beatles-style harmonies.

The fact is that very little on *Major Lodge Victory* will surprise fans, except in the way that great pop music always surprises listeners – by taking familiar elements and making them sound thrillingly new. “I felt it was important to stick to what we do best,” says Johnson. “We’ve changed, obviously. We’re a bit older. In the past, we were young and naïve, and, instead of dealing with our problems, we made the classic stupid move and broke up.”

“Now we don’t take it for granted,” he continues. “I’m very proud of the Gin Blossoms and our sound and our style of rock & roll. I’m excited about bringing that to the world again.”

GIN BLOSSOMS DETAILS

Radio: “Hey Jealousy,” “Found Out About You,” “As Long As It Matters,” “Follow You Down,” “Til I Hear It From You,” “Until I Fall Away,” and “Allison Road” are crossover hits in five different radio formats.

Discography:

- Dusted (*Independent*, 1989)
- *New Miserable Experience* (A&M, 1992) – RIAA-certified quadruple platinum
- *Wayne’s World 2* (Reprise, 1993) – contains “Idiot Summer”
- *Empire Records* (A&M, 1995) – contains “Til I Hear It From You”
- *Congratulations I’m Sorry* (A&M, 1996) RIAA-certified platinum
- *Outside Looking In: The Best of the Gin Blossoms* (A&M/UME, 1999)
- *New Miserable Experience – Deluxe Edition* (A&M/UME, 2002)
- *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* (Virgin, 2003) – contains “Follow You Down” RIAA – Certified Gold
- *20th Century Masters/The Millennium Collection – The Best of the Gin Blossoms* (A&M/UME, 2003)
- *20th Century Masters/The Millennium Collection – The Best of the Gin Blossoms: The DVD Collection* (A&M/UME, 2004)
- *Major Lodge Victory* (Hybrid/RED, 2006) – **Street date August 8, 2006**

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